

Drowning in Debt?
Reach Out!



A TWIST ON A CLASSIC
FRENCH ONION SOUP
MEETS WILD
MUSHROOMS {page 12}



OSCAR TIME
SOME BLING
FOR THE KING?
METRO'S PICKS {page 8}



HALIFAX

metro®

Monday, February 21, 2011
www.metronews.ca



News worth sharing.

Maritime. Rivalry



► Team Nova Scotia's Jennifer MacAskill tries to tip in a shot against Team P.E.I. netminder Hayden Pridham during the first period of last night's Canada Winter Games matchup at the Metro Centre.

RYAN TAPLIN/METRO

Team Nova Scotia hot on the ice

Nova Scotia won last night's game 4-1 in Day 1 action of women's hockey, and are back in action tonight against Quebec at 7:30 p.m. Story, page 16.

Did you get
yours yet?

Invites to Kate and William's
wedding are in the mail {page 5}

Havana is more
than just cigars

Stephen Kimber reflects on what
we could learn from Cuba {page 6}

Nova Scotia gears up for a big finish

► Second week of Games in full force today with boxing, figure skating and men's curling ► Nova Scotia leading Centennial Cup standings for most improved team



PHILIP CROUCHER
@METRONEWS.CA

Team Nova Scotia has a different mindset in Week 2 of the Canada Winter Games.

There were few medal hopefuls in Week 1, so to come away with one gold and one bronze put us where team officials thought we'd be.

This week, however, much more is expected.

Officials from several sports think multiple medals are a real possibility, so the goal is for plenty of trips to the podium over the event's final seven days.

"No doubt our expectations are higher this week," Team Nova Scotia chef de mission Frank Garner said yesterday.

"We have high expectations, from boxing and judo to figure skating and snowboarding."

The boxing and judo teams are especially confident.

Judo head coach Scott Tanner told Metro before the Games. "We could be up there with five or six medals if we perform the way we should."

Our medallists so far

► Jared Goad, Bible Hill — gold, floor exercise for gymnastics

► Stephen Clouter, Lawrencetown — bronze, parallel bars for gymnastics

Boxing head coach Wayne Gordon took it one step further:

"I would not be shocked if we won seven medals," he said.

Garner is optimistic Team Nova Scotia can hit at least 10 medals, adding that team morale is good right now, thanks to the two medals won at gymnastics late last week.

"It really helped — especially that gold medal," he said. "It just got everyone excited — and saying 'Nova Scotians can do it!'"

Nova Scotia is tied for ninth in the medal standings with the Yukon, one back of Newfoundland and Labrador and two behind New Brunswick.

Our record for medals is 21, set in 1991. Our best medal finish is sixth, set in 1979.

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- Tammy B.

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- National Artists Program Gala performance launches Citadel High School's Spatz Theatre
- There will be two shows Saturday: A 2 p.m. matinee and an evening show at 7
- Artists range in age from 16 to 22 years old



Young artists mix it up at the Games



No gold, silver or bronze will be given out at this Canada Games event.

In fact, the provincial representatives in the National Artists Program are making a show of working together — not competing against each other.

"They all compete to get in, just like the athletes do, but once they're here we take them and make them a family," said Chris O'Neill, co-artistic director.

"There's an amazing opportunity to create a community of artists from every part of this country."

Each province and territory sent three artists to Halifax. During the two weeks at the Games, they will be working together and mixing their artistry to perform at the Saturday

"It's such a large country that these moments are creating better citizens. They're creating people who have a sense of the diversity of our geography and our cultures." CHRIS O'NEILL, CO-ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

There are visual artists, dancers, singers, musicians and many more. There's a circus artist from Quebec, a drum dancer from Nunavut, and a photographer from the Northwest Territories, to name a few.

"As far as I know it's the only opportunity in Canada that brings together repre-

sentative artists from every single province and territory," said O'Neill who joined the artists at a public display at the Seaport Market yesterday.

And representing Nova Scotia: A jazz-blues singer-pianist; a pianist-composer; and a ballet dancer.

Reeny Smith of Halifax

has been singing since she could talk. At 18, she's trying out dancing and acting as well as sharing her gift of the blues.

"Coming into it I thought I'd be doing a lot of singing and that would be it, but ... I've explored all different kinds of arts that are new to me," she said, adding she's blown away by the depth of talent she's seen over the past week.

"I'm just happy to be a part of it and represent our province."

"It is difficult because we have to expand out of our comfort zones. Some things have been really challenging but overall it's been really fun."

HALIFAX SINGER REENY SMITH

On the agenda

During the two weeks of the Games, the 39 artists selected in the National Artists Program will:

► Lead mentoring workshops with young aspiring artists from the HRM.

- Participate in workshops and collaborative exercises.
- Attend Canada Games events.
- Retreat to the Ross Creek Centre for the Arts.
- Perform in the NAP Gala.

Arts united

ALBERTA

Holly Cinnamon, theatre and dance
Calum Graham, music
Taryn Kneteman, visual arts

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Claire Butterfield, music
Andrew Cohen, musical theatre
Daina Ashbee, dance

MANITOBA

Carly Dow, music
Andrea MacAsaet, musical theatre
Caroline Mousseau, visual artist

NEW BRUNSWICK

Jessie Babin, visual artist
Cynthia Aube Boulay, dance
Alison Miller, dance

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Danielle O'Connor, creative writer
Luke Lawrence, actor
Meagan Musseau, visual artist

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Dayna Polakoff, photographer

NOVA SCOTIA

Maureen (Reeny) Smith, singer-pianist
Gregory Palmer, music and dance
Lucas Porter, concert pianist

NUNAVUT

Abraham Eetuk, jewelry maker
Abraham Iksiraq, visual artist
Ita Kanayuk, throat singer and drum dancer

ONTARIO

Jacob Hughes, visual artist
Michael Caccamo, actor
Jamee Valin, dancer

P.E.I.

Emma Gallant, singer-songwriter
Samantha MacKay, dancer
Lucas Olscamp, literary artist, director, stage manager, playwright

QUEBEC

Josy-Anne Charette, singer
Lisa-Marie Lapointe, visual artist
Jean-Félix Bélanger, circus arts

SASKATCHEWAN

Lucy Hill, actor, theatre producer, improviser
Nickita Longman, poet
Whitney Mather, opera singer

YUKON

Valerie Herdes, dancer
Clancy McInnis, musician
Jada Powell, dancer

● JENNIFER TAPLIN



News on the move

1 Download the free ScanLife application with your smartphone at 2dscan.com

2 Use the ScanLife application on your smartphone to scan 2D barcodes in Metro

3 The codes will direct your mobile browser to relevant content at m.metronews.ca

On the web at metronews.ca



Canada's big banks will lead the way for investors as the markets open for the week. Video at metronews.ca

Follow us on Twitter @metrohalifax



Coach says people must 'stick their necks out' to keep women's hockey in Olympics. Scan code for story.

Curiosity. Consumed the dog



► Pixie, a 10-pound toy Manchester terrier, checks out her friend Marvin, a 165-pound Great Dane, yesterday at the annual Doggie Expo at the Forum's Multi Purpose Centre.

RYAN TAPLIN/METRO

Show of support for greyhounds

The Doggie expo offers something for all dog lovers. The event raises money for Greyhound Pets of Atlantic Canada, a group that finds homes for retired racing greyhounds. Such animals face uncertain futures when their racing careers end.

Stowaways to appear before prison officials

► Nationality of hidden passengers found aboard Swedish vessel remains unknown ► Hearing will determine whether men stay in custody

Detention reviews will be held today for two stowaways found aboard a container ship in Halifax.

Julie Chamagne, executive director of the Halifax Refugee Clinic, said yesterday the men will be dealt with during separate reviews at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility, where they are being held.

Chamagne, who will attend both reviews, still didn't know the nationality of the men but believes they speak Arabic and are from North Africa.

The men were found

Wednesday aboard the Swedish-owned Atlantic Concert after the ACL vessel arrived in Halifax from Liverpool, England.

They have claimed refugee status but Chamagne said today's hearings will decide only if the men should remain in custody until their claims are dealt with by an immigration hearing.

The ship left Liverpool on Feb. 6 and spent 10 days crossing the North Atlantic to Halifax.

While any foreign national can be detained for a

variety of reasons, including posing a danger to the Canadian public, Chamagne said she suspects the two men lack identification.

"Usually when people arrive by container ship like that, they've been told by smugglers or by community members overseas to not bring identification," said Chamagne, whose association provides free legal services to people claiming refugee status.

"They tell (the stowaways) they'd be at risk of being returned right away,

which is not true under international refugee law."

THE CANADIAN PRESS



CONTRIBUTED

RCMP bust pot operation

Police have uncovered a marijuana grow-op at a business in the industrial park in Bedford.

RCMP say they executed a search warrant at the property, which is on Bluewater Road, around 10 p.m. on Saturday and seized 375 mature marijuana plants. Grow-op

equipment was also found, police say, as was an electrical bypass, suggesting that power was being stolen.

"The operation was highly sophisticated," said Staff Sgt. Roddie MacDonald, drug co-ordinator for RCMP Nova Scotia, in a release. "The marijuana

(grow-op) was located in an industrial complex along with legitimate businesses, and this puts people's lives at risk."

Police say a 39-year-old man from Prospect has been arrested and released on a promise to appear in court at a later date.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

CRIME

Home invader takes cash, flees

Police are investigating an armed robbery at an apartment on the 6100 block of Shirley Street.

Halifax Regional Police say a 19-year-old male and his friend were inside the apartment at about 10:30 p.m. on Sat-

urday when a man entered through an unlocked door.

Police say the man was armed with a handgun and stole cash before leaving.

No one was injured.

Police say one of the men ran from the apartment to call police. The other person inside was ordered to the floor by the intruder, who was wearing a ski mask, black sweater and gloves.

Police don't believe it was a random incident.

● METRO

Vehicles do anti-drug duty

A Canadian warship and two Aurora long-range patrol planes have returned to Nova Scotia after a counter-drug operation in the Caribbean.

The Defence Department says HMCS Toronto and two CP-140 aircraft were part of a U.S.-led task force that intercepted more than 1,650 kilograms of cocaine during its month-long deployment. The warship and planes returned home on Friday.

The mission marked the first time a U.S. Coast Guard

"Our sailors and air personnel are a key component of international efforts to interdict cocaine destined for North America."

DEFENCE MINISTER PETER MACKAY

law-enforcement detachment conducted operations from a Canadian navy ship.

The frigate was involved in surveillance, logistics and refuelling during the mission. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Driver due in court for stunt speed

Vessel departs

The Atlantic Concert departed Halifax on Saturday.

► There were reports that an additional three stowaways may have been aboard, but the Canada Border Services Agency confirmed Saturday that only two people were found.

A 17-year-old male has been charged with stunt driving after reaching 197 km/h in a 110-km/h zone, police say.

Halifax RCMP say the teen was stopped on Feb. 17 for exceeding the speed limit on Highway 102 near Exit 2.

The driver will appear in court at a later date.

● METRO

Thieves break into build site

A building under construction and several storage units were broken into over the weekend on the 400 block of Larry Uteck Boulevard, police say.

Several pieces of equipment were stolen.

Police believe the incidents took place between Friday evening and Saturday morning.

● METRO

News in brief

Clerk attacked with spray during robbery

CRIME. A hotel clerk was sprayed with an unknown irritant during a robbery on Friday night.

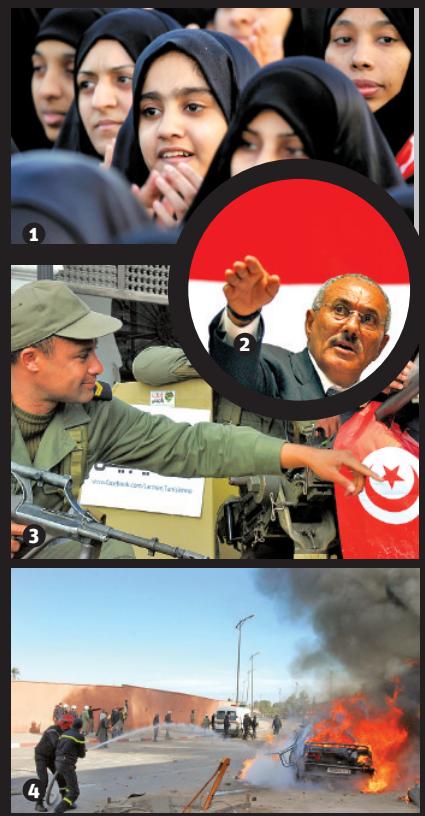
The incident happened at the Comfort Inn on the Bedford Highway.

Police say a man wearing a bandana walked into the hotel lobby shortly after 8 p.m. and demanded cash from the woman who was working at the front desk.

Police say he then sprayed the 25-year-old woman with the irritant before grabbing an undisclosed amount of money and taking off.

The employee was treated at the scene and did not require hospital care.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

News
in pictures**1**

Bahraini anti-government protesters at the Pearl roundabout in Manama, Bahrain, yesterday. Bahrain's opposition weighed the regime's offer for talks after nearly a week of protests calling for the tiny Gulf nation's monarchy to give up its near-absolute control over key policies.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

2

Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh offered to oversee a dialogue between the ruling party and the opposition, in a bid to diffuse 11 days of protests across the country calling for his ouster. Opposition groups are refusing all dialogue with Ali Abdullah Saleh, a key U.S. ally, as long as security forces suppress demonstrations.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

3

Tunisian military looks at a demonstrator hanging a flag on an armoured vehicle during an anti-government demonstration in Tunis yesterday. Several thousand protesters swarmed the governmental palace to demand the ouster of the provisional government.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

4

A car burns during protests in Marrakech in one of a string of nationwide protests that brought thousands to the streets across Morocco yesterday in an effort to push for greater democracy and constitutional reform. Thousands of people marched in cities across Morocco, demanding greater democracy in the North African kingdom.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

1. HASSAN AMMAR/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
2. HANI MOHAMMED/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
3. HASSEENE DRIDI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
4. TARIK NAJMAOU/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Royal invites in the mail

Keep an eye on the mailbox — Britain's Prince William and bride-to-be Kate Middleton have sent out invites to their hotly anticipated royal wedding to around 1,900 guests.

Military personnel and charity workers will mingle with European royalty, diplomats, and the family and friends of the couple at the Westminster Abbey ceremony on April 29, St. James's Palace said yesterday.

Queen Elizabeth II and

the Duke of Edinburgh will lead a group of 50 members of the British royal family at the wedding, while around 40 representatives of foreign royal families — likely to include dignitaries from Spain, Sweden and Greece — will also attend.

It isn't yet known whether celebrities including singer Elton John — a friend of William's mother Diana, the Princess of Wales — or Kanye West, a favourite of the prince who

performed at a 2007 tribute concert for his mother, are among those who'll receive a prized invite.

Britain's Sunday Express newspaper reported that footballer David Beckham and his wife, Victoria, are on the royal guest list.

One guest already ruled out is Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York.

In a statement, William's office said it would not disclose details of individual guests.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



► A worker puts wedding invites into envelopes.

Canadian rallies support Libyans

► More than 200 killed since Wednesday ► Demonstrators calling for Libya leader to resign

There were several rallies in Canada this weekend to show support for protesters in Libya who defied a crackdown by leader Moammar Gadhafi's regime by returning yesterday to the flashpoint city of Benghazi to demand the ruler be overthrown.

More than 100 people rallied in Toronto yesterday. Rallies were also held on Parliament Hill and at the Manitoba legislature on Saturday.

Yesterday, Libyan forces fired machine guns at thousands of mourners marching in a funeral for anti-government protesters in the city of Benghazi, a day after commandos and foreign mercenaries attacked demonstrators with assault rifles and other heavy weapons.

At least 204 people have been killed in the oil-rich country since Wednesday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Libya unrest

- Libyan authorities are considering constitutional changes following anti-government rallies.
- Italy has strong ties both politically and economically with Libya, which it occupied for 30 years until 1943.
- United States is warning travellers to avoid non-essential visits to Libya because of the continuing clashes between protesters and security.
- The State Department has also cautioned citizens already in Libya against travelling to eastern Libya, where many of the heated protests are taking place.

2M The capital Tripoli, a city of some 2 million people, remained in a stronghold of Gadhafi support, with security curbing small protests.



► Protesters rally against Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi in the Mediterranean port city of Alexandria yesterday.

Canada to research Caribbean malady

The Government of Canada plans to spend \$55,000 to combat Montezuma's revenge.

The Public Health Agency of Canada has published details of its intention to fight food-borne, gastrointestinal illness in eight Caribbean countries.

Ottawa has put out a tender for researchers who will help analyze data that will measure the impact in the Caribbean.

The malady, spread through contaminated food and water, strikes locals as well as the region's visitors.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

u.s. trailing hijacked boat

A warship is tracking a yacht carrying four Americans hijacked by Somali pirates, a pirate said yesterday.

It was hijacked Friday off the Oman coast.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Texas wants to arm students

Texas is preparing to give college students and professors the right to carry guns on campus.

More than half the members of the Texas House signed on as co-authors of a measure directing universities to allow concealed handguns.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A BALANCE BETWEEN HISTORY AND LIFE

Urban Compass

STEPHEN KIMBER



After spending three weeks in Havana researching a book — and avoiding winter — I have reached a few modest conclusions.

First, there are things Haligonians could teach Habaneros. About pooper scooper laws, for example. Havana's sidewalks are a canine minefield. That becomes more understandable when you realize there's a shortage of plastic bags.

Just as it is understandable that — largely because of the 50-year-old U.S. trade embargo — Havana is a living, belching, vintage car museum. Still, Cuban lungs could benefit from North American-style exhaust emissions regulations.

And 21st-century Canadians —

for whom recycling is now routine — might be appalled at how casually Habaneros dispose of their disposables. People eat on the run, buying snacks from sidewalk vendors.

When they're done, they're more likely to drop the remains than look for a waste bin. (That said, the nightly scouring of Havana's streets and sidewalks is magical. By dawn, the city is pristine again — yesterday's remnants swept into block-sized green bins and carted off — and ready for another day's droppings.)

But Halifax could learn from Havana, too.

Consider downtown redevelopment.

Though much of Havana still resembles a bombed-out city — there are daily reports of building collapses — the Cuban government is investing a huge chunk of tourism revenues in renewing its historic core.

The billion-dollar rebuilding of Havana Vieja — the five-square-kilometre district founded in 1519 — only began in earnest in 1993 af-

ter the collapse of the Soviet Union forced the country to turn to tourism.

But unlike most North American urban redevelopment schemes — in which history becomes a tourist artifact and ordinary life is eliminated — the

guiding philosophy behind Havana's historic restoration has been that "the inhabitants become the beneficiaries."

Wander through the pedestrianized side streets of Old Havana. Kids play soccer, dogs sleep where they please. Glance into open doorways. You're as likely to see a family gathered around the TV as a souvenir shop.

On Obispo, Havana's main tourist artery, there's a primary school. In lovingly restored Plaza Vieja, there are trendy restaurants, even a popular micro-brewery. But if you look up, you'll see a family's laundry drying on a balcony.

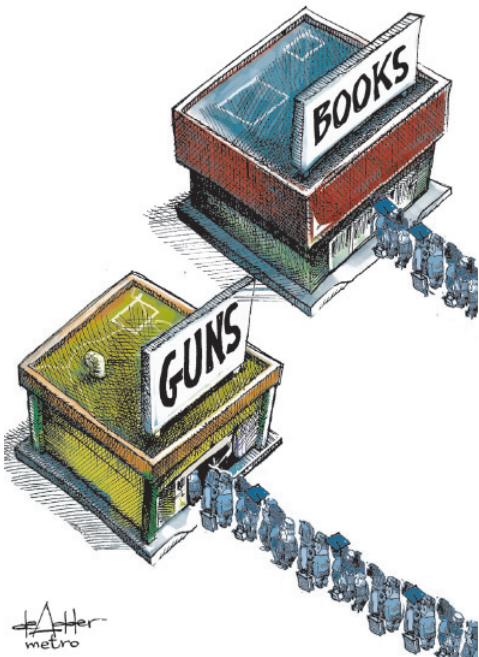
Havana has seemingly found a balance between its history and life.

Halifax could take something from that. Oh yes, and a little sunshine, too.

Cartoon

COLLEGE PREP IN TEXAS:

MICHAEL DE ADDER



Worth mentioning

Fancy a royal wedding condom? Or maybe a commemorative sick bag?

The April wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton has spawned a cottage industry of inappropriate souvenirs.

For ladies and gentlemen who wouldn't dare touch anything that hadn't personally been approved by the princely couple, the Royal Collection sells handmade tankards, plates and pillboxes in English fine bone china, complete with William and Middleton's entwined initials in gold and silver.

But online and in stores, entrepreneurs are cashing in on the inevitable popu-

Sick souvenirs



lar backlash against royal wedding mania.

Most infamous are the royal wedding-themed condoms — an online sensation that featured prominently on the website of celebrity-obsessed OK! Magazine. William and Kate ashtrays allow smokers to rub their butts out in the face of the royal couple.

Then there are the William and Kate barf bags, made by Newcastle-based designer Lydia Leith. They feature a picture of the couple underneath the words "Throne Up."

Leith, 24, told The Associated Press she wanted to go about "poking fun at a social occasion from one side or another."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Does the Mideast unrest make you nervous? Why?

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Metro Minute at Crosby exhibit

Fans of Sidney Crosby should check out the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame during the Canada Winter Games as it has expanded its exhibit on the Pittsburgh Penguins superstar forward.

The Cole Harbour native's stick with which he scored the Olympic gold-medal winning goal at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics, along with his

helmet and gloves, are now on display in this exhibit.

Regular exhibit features include the famous dryer that took a beating in the Crosby's family basement, to photos of him in his early days to present day.

There is free admission to the hall, which is located inside the Halifax Metro Centre.

• METRO



► The Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame has expanded its Sidney Crosby exhibit during the Canada Winter Games.

Loan program racks up record losses: Report

- Revenue does not come close to covering loss claims
- Taxpayers on hook for up to 85 per cent of losses

A federal loan program for small business paid the banks and other financial institutions a record \$113 million in loss claims last year, most of it in hard-hit Ontario, a new report says.

The Canada Small Business Financing Program also guaranteed about \$957 million in new loans in 2009-10, which means the annual loss rate hit about 12 per cent.

The report, tabled in Parliament, shows that a troubled program that was supposed to break even continues to suffer from red ink and a dwindling number of customers.

The big trouble spot was Ontario, where only about one-third of the new loans were issued but more than half the losses occurred.

Industry Minister Tony

\$11B

The loan-guarantee fund dates from 1999. The fund has so far guaranteed more than \$11 billion in small-business loans issued by banks, credit unions and other financial institutions.

Clement defended the program, saying in the report's introduction that it "continues to be a successful mechanism for facilitating asset-backed debt financing to business."

But a KPMG study last year found that it has incurred net losses to Ottawa of more than \$300 million and that "the gap between claims and fee revenues

will continue to exist and most likely expand."

The number of businesses helped by the program hit a new low in 2009-10 — about 7,500, half the number of a decade ago — but the annual loan value still hit nearly a billion dollars because loan limits were doubled to \$500,000 last year.

The loans tend to go to the accommodation and food-services sector.

There were a record 1,968 loss claims on the program last year, or an average of about \$58,000 each.

The program suffered bad publicity last fall when a Toronto Star investigation reported that about \$4 million in loan money under the program was partitioned away. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Market moment

TSX	Dollar	Oil	Natural gas
– 13.04 (14,123.11)	– 0.11¢ (101.42¢ US)	+ \$0.87 US (\$89.71 US)	1,000 cu ft \$3.876 US (+ 0.8¢) Gold contracts \$1,388.60 (+ \$3.50)

PRICES AS OF 3 P.M. FRIDAY



Softwood lumber sales rise

Driven by demand from China, producers in Western Canada are making money again. Hank

Ketcham of West Fraser Timber Co. Ltd. in Vancouver said the company shipped up to 30 per cent

more softwood to China in the last three months of last year compared to earlier in 2010. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

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Oscar Box Office



The 10 movies nominated for Best Picture at the Academy Awards by their box office numbers.

1. Toy Story 3 — \$415 million
2. Inception — \$292.5M
3. True Grit — \$161M
4. Black Swan — \$99.8M
5. The Social Network — \$96.6M
6. The King's Speech — \$95.4M
7. The Fighter — \$86M
8. The Kids Are All Right — \$20.8M
9. 127 Hours — \$16.9M
10. Winter's Bone — \$6.3M

METRO



Elusive British street artist Banksy is welcome at Oscars, planners say, but will he show?

Photo: Malawi, 2009 © Tim Freccia/CARE

**WALK
IN HER
SHOES**

► The countdown to the Academy Awards is on! ► With less than a week to go, Metro offers up its picks for who takes home the golden statue in the Top 10 categories

Who is taking home Oscar?

**Best Picture**

Even with 10 nominees, it's come down to a race between two films: Early favourite The Social Network bloomed early, snatching up a dizzying number of critics' awards and the Golden Globe, but The King's Speech has been on an unstoppable run. The Academy will likely split along age lines for this one. But our money's on The Social Network making a comeback.

**Best Director**

David Fincher feels like the front-runner for us with The Social Network, but Darren Aronofsky or David O. Russell could just as easily take it for Black Swan or The Fighter, respectively. And don't discount the Coen Brothers — longtime Oscar favourites — and their heavily nominated True Grit.

**Best Actor**

This is The King's Speech star Colin Firth's year, and no other nominee has the momentum he's built up for his portrayal of the royal stammerer.

**Best Actress**

We predict Annette Bening is going home empty-handed again. Though she's been nominated for an Oscar four times without winning, she's going to have to wait for No. 5, because this is Natalie Portman's award. The year of training, the physical transformation and the emotional gymnastics add up to the kind of showy performance the Academy eats up. And she's increased her good will since being nominated.

**Best Supporting Actor**

Another two-horse toss-up, this one comes down to a battle between the latest in a distinguished career (Geoffrey Rush in The King's Speech) versus over-the-top showmanship (Christian Bale in The Fighter). While Rush has been cleaning up elsewhere, expect voters to side with Bale for the same reasons they'll pick Portman for Best Actress.

**Best Supporting Actress**

Here lies this year's true guessing game. The only nominee close to being considered a front-runner, Melissa Leo (The Fighter), has been handicapped by both a fellow nominee from her film (Amy Adams) and her own misguided, self-financed publicity campaign. Helena Bonham Carter could steal it for The King's Speech.

**Best Original Screenplay**

Shut out of the Best Director category, expect Christopher Nolan to bring home this as a consolation prize for his brilliant, mind-bending Inception. Of course, the Academy could continue to snub him and give this one to David Seidler for The King's Speech.

**Best Adapted Screenplay**

Aaron Sorkin will win for The Social Network. It's not even a question at this point. If Sorkin looks surprised or unprepared at the podium, it's an act.

**Best Animated Feature**

With a nomination for Best Picture on its resumé and Oscar juggernaut Pixar behind it, Toy Story 3 seems like a sure thing, though we'd be just as happy if the surprise hit, How to Train Your Dragon, or art-house favourite The Illusionist pulled an upset.

**Best Documentary Feature**

We're really hoping Exit Through the Gift Shop wins, not just because it's an amazing film but because we want to see what notoriously camera-shy street artist Banksy does for an acceptance speech. But if the Academy is feeling more traditional, expect Inside Job, a film about the financial crisis, to take the prize.



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Most valuable Bieber

► Justin Bieber wins MVP award in losing effort at NBA all-star celebrity game

Justin Bieber finally won a trophy in L.A.

The Canadian teen singing sensation, who was shut out at the Grammys, was chosen most valuable player despite playing for the losing team in the National Basketball Association all-star celebrity game on Friday night.

Bieber had eight points, four assists and two rebounds for the West team, which lost 54-49 to the East at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

Hall of Famer Scottie Pippen led the Magic Johnson-coached East team with 17 points in a game whose defensive highlight might have been Pippen's third-quarter block of Bieber.

The vertically challenged Bieber scampered up and down the court, his famous shaggy 'do bouncing with every step as girls shrieked at the sight.

"He has the softest hair," marvelled former Los Angeles Laker Rick

ing an in-game interview. "I'm controlling this whole team. I'm just kidding."

With actor Jamie Foxx and Lakers star Lamar Odom watching, Bieber missed a three-pointer that would have tied it with 30 seconds to go.

Afterward, the 16-year-old from Stratford, Ont., was hurried off the court by burly security guards.

Bieber's week began when he lost out on his two Grammy nominations at Staples Center.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Teammates

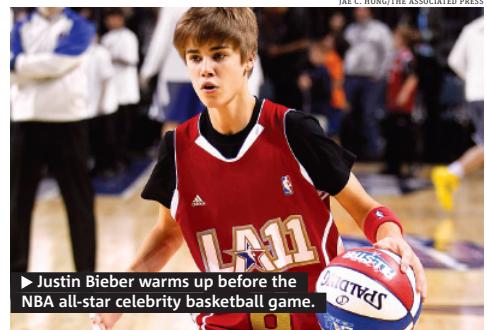
► Bieber's celebrity teammates were Zac Levi of Chuck, R&B singer Trey Songz, rapper Romeo Miller, and Rob Kardashian, whose sister Khloe is married to Lamar Odom.

Fox, who patted his West teammate Bieber on the head during the game.

Wearing a black T-shirt under his red-and-white jersey, he spent most of the game hitching up his shorts that fell well below the knee. His pre-game stretching included trying, but failing, to touch his toes.

Bieber showed off some slick moves, dribbling behind his back, and driving and dishing to taller teammate and ESPN analyst Jalen Rose. Bieber fed A.C. Green for the game's first basket, and the singer later hit a three-pointer.

"I'm just running back and forth," Bieber said dur-



► Justin Bieber warms up before the NBA all-star celebrity basketball game.

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Gaga's 'drunk diet'

► Balances it with daily workouts

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES



James Cameron
[@JimCameron]
Did everyone love *Black Swan* as much as me? My daughter Josa & I are 2 thumbs way up on Aronofsky's masterpiece. Natalie P is magnificent



Conan O'Brien
[@ConanOBrien]
Charlie Sheen says he's never been drunk on the set of "Two & A Half Men." I, too, have never been drunk on the set of "Two & A Half Men."

Lady Gaga admits that she enjoys a hard-partying lifestyle, but that doesn't mean she doesn't stick to a workout regime.

"I am on the drunk diet," the singer says in an interview with Sirius satellite radio. "I live my life as I want to, creatively. I like to drink whiskey and stuff while I am working. But the deal is I've got to work out every day, and I work out hung over if I am hung over. And it's about the cross-training and keeping yourself inspired. I have to say, I do a ton of yoga."



► Whiskey and yoga:
A day in the life of
Lady Gaga.

LAINIE, ETALK CORRESPONDENT AND
AUTHOR OF LAINEGOSSIP.COM

BEST ACTRESS: ANNETTE BENING

The Kids Are All Right

Bening was offered the part of Catwoman in *Batman Returns*, starring Michael Keaton. She accepted the role but subsequently turned it down when she discovered she was pregnant. That was also when Sean Young infamously dressed up in a

Catwoman suit to win the role, which eventually went to Michelle Pfeiffer.

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An obit for Rover

► The death of a pet is often as difficult as losing a family member ► Pet obituaries help

Pets are our best friends, faithful companions and family members. And not even death, it seems, can break that bond between animal and human.

Nowhere is that more apparent than in the increasing number of pet obituaries springing up in some newspapers and on

Pet support

There are online resources that can help you to get past the death of your pet.

► doggyheaven.com
► immortalpets.com
► ocpets.ocregister.com

social media sites.

On websites such as Doggy Heaven and Immortal Pets, on blogs and on countless Facebook pages, grief-stricken pet owners funnel their sadness into heartfelt tributes.

The obituaries — accompanied by photo montages, poems and notes of condolence from friends — are part therapy and part memorial.

The sites also testify to the coveted place pets hold in American culture. About 62 per cent of households include pets, according to the American Pet Products Association.

"It's a reflection of the social fabric," says Saman-



tha Gowen, who writes the Orange County Register's Pet Tales blog, which regularly includes obituaries.

She notes that most pet

owners are aware that they will likely outlive their animals, which gives the relationship a special poignancy. "There's a sense of empathy when it comes to pets and their lives," says Gowen.

Online obituaries offer pet owners a way to find support and channel the pain of losing a pet.

Kristin Tomyn, a 39-year-old from Indianapolis, was distraught after the sudden death of Dakota, her 12-year-old Siberian Husky, and was searching the Internet for consolation when she found Doggy Heaven.

Tomyn posted an obit, which she says helped her

"We would get emails from people in tears, saying they wanted a memorial for Fido ... from people who had nothing in the world but their pet."

TERRY OLDROYD, OWNER OF THE WEBSITE IMMORTAL PETS

get through early feelings of shock and nearly inconsolable loss. "It was part of the healing process," she says. "It's getting those feelings out there. You feel like you are being heard."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dog booties



Do household dogs need to wear booties? Canine experts say no, but with some exceptions.

- When healing from foot surgery, or if cuts or a torn toenail exist.
- When snow cakes in a dog's pads, leading to hobbling snowballs.
- When an older dog lacks firm footing or is afraid to get up and move around.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Poll asks pet owners if declawing and de-barking surgeries should be done.

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Tame wild mushrooms with this French Onion soup

► Give this classic comfort food a hearty upgrade

DINNER EXPRESS

EMILY RICHARDS

FOOD@METRONEWS.CA



Adding wild mushrooms to this French onion soup adds a twist to make a hearty flavour that is perfect.

It's a great make ahead type of meal that can be heated up after a fun afternoon making a snowman.

Preparation:

1 Place mushrooms in a small bowl and pour water over top. Let stand 15 minutes or until softened. Drain, reserving water and chop

mushrooms; set aside.

2 Meanwhile, in pot, melt butter over medium high heat and cook onions for about 10 minutes. Add mushrooms, garlic and thyme and cook for about 15 minutes or until no liquid remains. Add sherry and cook until evaporated. Add stock and bring to a gentle boil.

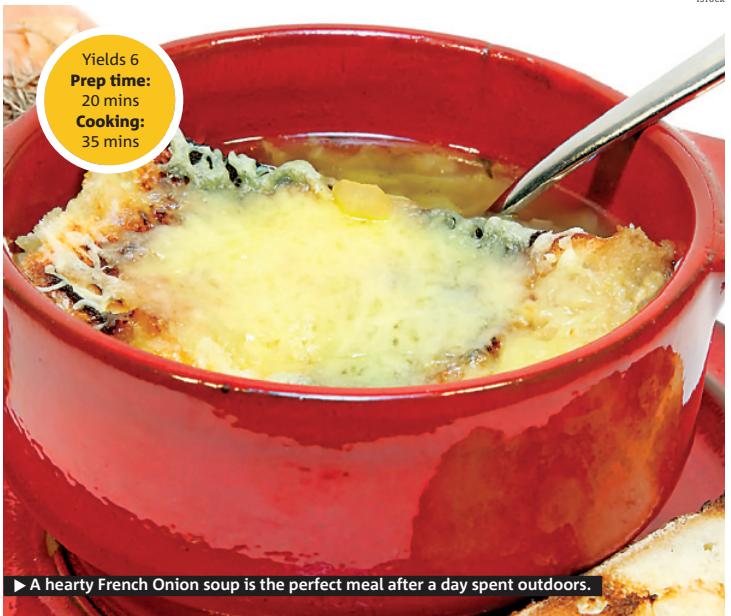
3 In small bowl, whisk together eggs, cream and parsley. Pour mix into stock, stirring and cook for about 2 minutes.

EMILY RICHARDS IS A PROFESSIONAL HOME ECONOMIST, COOK BOOK AUTHOR AND A TV CELEBRITY CHEF. FOR MORE, VISIT EMILY-RICHARDSCOOKS.CA.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup (50 mL) dried mushrooms
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) boiling water
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) butter
- 2 large Spanish onions, thinly sliced
- 2 lbs (1 kg) wild mushrooms, such as shiitake, cremini, oyster or king, trimmed and thinly sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) chopped fresh thyme or 1 tsp (5 mL) dried
- 1/3 cup (75 mL) dry sherry or Madeira wine
- 8 cups (2 L) vegetable or chicken stock
- 16 slices of baguette
- 6 oz (175 g) Cambonzola cheese, sliced

Yields 6
Prep time:
20 mins
Cooking:
35 mins



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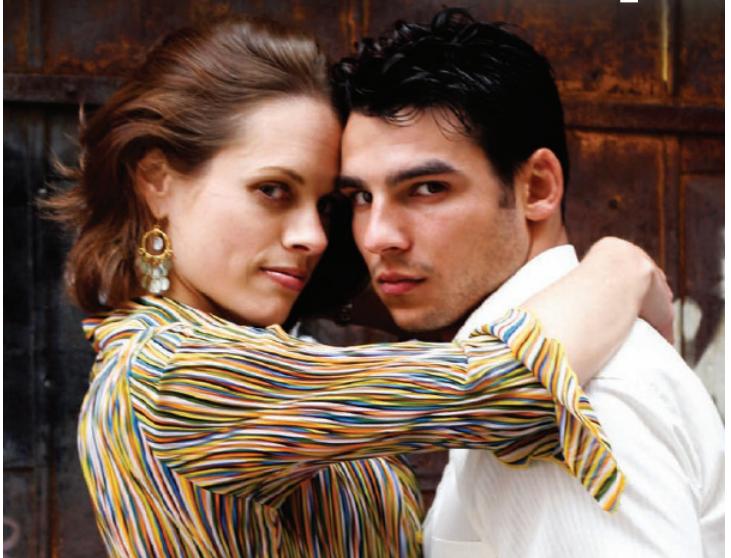
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More sports



The Dalhousie Tigers lost a tight one against the Acadia Axemen yesterday in Wolfville, falling 73-71 in Atlantic University Sport men's basketball action. Simon Farine, pictured, had 19 points in the loss, while Joseph Schow (14) and Stephen Lopez (13) also hit double figures.

Mooseheads look to raise intensity with lockdown D

► Mooseheads, 18-37-1-2 after weekend, prepare to visit the Saint John Sea Dogs (48-5-1-2) on Tuesday at 7 p.m.



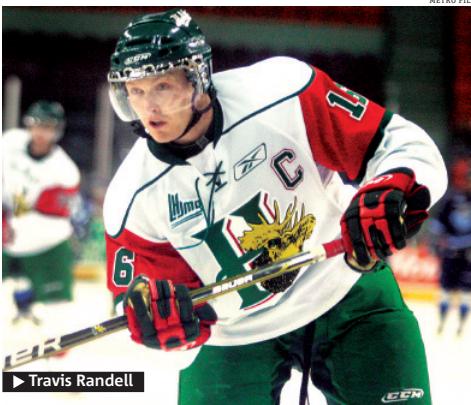
MATTHEW WUEST
@METRONEWS.CA

The Halifax Mooseheads are attempting to tighten the defensive clamps as the playoffs approach.

The Mooseheads allowed just two goals and 43 shots during a weekend split, blanking the Cape Breton Screaming Eagles 1-0 on Friday and falling 2-1 to the Val-d'Or Foreurs on Saturday at the Metro Centre.

For a team that has had its share of shaky moments in its own zone this season, the weekend was a positive sign with just 10 games left until the QMJHL post-season.

"We're playing more of a playoff-style hockey game right now," said Mooseheads captain Travis Randell. "In the playoffs, there's a different level of (competitive-



► Travis Randell

ness) for sure.... Everything begins to tighten up and there's a lot more intensity."

Veteran goalie Frederic Piché did his part, starting both games and turning aside 41 shots to improve his goals-against average with the Herd to 3.17 and his save percent-

age to .887.

In front of him, Randell said the team has committed to getting better.

"We've been working a lot in practice on three-on-threes down low, defensive-zone coverage and back-checking," he said. "It's really helping our game."

Five. Of Hearts



► Nova Scotia skip Heather Smith-Dacey of Mayflower calls a shot during the morning draw at the Scotties Tournament of Hearts in Charlottetown, P.E.I., yesterday.

FRANK GUNN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Third-place logjam

Smith-Dacey split yesterday's games, losing 10-5 to Quebec and beating Yukon/Northwest Territories 8-2, to sit 2-2. The Smith-Dacey rink is one of five teams tied for third place in the standings. ● METRO

Dalhousie Tigers swept from playoffs

The Dalhousie Tigers' long-awaited foray into the Atlantic University Sport men's hockey playoffs didn't last long.

The St. Francis Xavier X-Men completed a two-game sweep of the Tigers on Saturday at Memorial Arena, winning 3-2 to take the best-of-three quarter-final.

The Tigers had not

been in the post-season since 2004.

The Saint Mary's Huskies, who had a quarter-final bye, will face the X-Men in the best-of-five semifinals starting this week.

The UNB Varsity Reds will face the Acadia Axemen in the other semifinal.

● METRO

Dalhousie volleyball swept out of AUS final

The Dalhousie Tigers' drive for 25 fell short.

The 24-time defending Atlantic University Sport men's volleyball champions lost 3-2 to the UNB Varsity Reds last night in Fredericton to concede the best-of-three final 2-0.

● METRO

Rainmen feeling heat after losses

The Halifax Rainmen have lost back-to-back games for the first time this season.

The Rainmen lost 102-88 on the road to the Rochester RazorSharks on Saturday to fall to 6-4. Now third overall, the team is suddenly feeling pressure from behind in the Premier Basketball League playoff race.

The Rainmen are just a half-game ahead of the fourth-place Saint John Mill Rats, 5-4, and two games ahead of the fifth-place RazorSharks, 4-6. The top four teams make the playoffs after the 20-game regular season.

Mike Evans is now 1-2 as head coach of the Rainmen.

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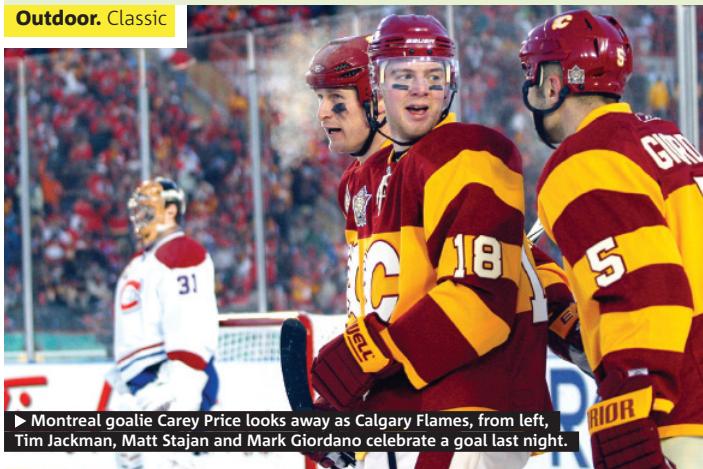


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► Montreal goalie Carey Price looks away as Calgary Flames, from left, Tim Jackman, Matt Stajan and Mark Giordano celebrate a goal last night.

JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Flames use home-ice advantage

The Calgary Flames bucked a trend of host teams losing NHL outdoor games by defeating the Montreal Canadiens 4-0 in the Heritage Classic yesterday. Rene Bourque scored a pair of goals, Anton Babchuk scored short-handed and Alex Tanguay also struck for Calgary in front of 41,022 on a cold, clear night at McMahon Stadium. THE CANADIAN PRESS

A historic day at the Daytona 500

► NASCAR's biggest names stunned by 20-year-old winner ► Bayne wins race one day after birthday

Trevor Bayne finally made a mistake. Fortunately for him, it didn't happen until he missed the turn pulling into Victory Lane at the Daytona 500.

The youngest driver to win the Great American Race gave the historic Wood Brothers team its fifth Daytona 500 victory — its first since 1976 with David Pearson — and Bayne did it in a No. 21 Ford that was retrofitted to resemble Pearson's famed ride.

In his second Sprint Cup start, the 20-year-old Bayne

pulled off a thrilling overtime win yesterday at Daytona International Speedway, holding off Carl Edwards after fan favourite Dale Earnhardt Jr. crashed in NASCAR's first attempt at a green-white-checkered flag finish.

"Our first 500, are you kidding me?" said Bayne. "Wow. This is unbelievable."

Just one day after leaving his teen years behind, the sport's biggest race was captured by a Tennessean who shaves once a week and considers *Rugrats* his

favourite TV show.

The rookie had been great throughout Speedweeks, even pushing four-time champion Jeff Gordon for most of a qualifying race.

Bayne breaks Gordon's mark as the youngest winner in Daytona 500 history. Gordon was 26 when he won the 500 in 1997.

"I think it's very cool. Trevor's a good kid, and I love the Wood Brothers," Gordon said. "I'm really happy for him. And I think it's great for the sport."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Final packs in hockey fans

Men's hockey was a hit at the Canada Winter Games.

Friday's sellout crowd at the Metro Centre for the gold-medal tilt between British Columbia and Quebec set a single-game attendance record for any sport in the history of the Games, while also setting a new mark for weeklong attendance in men's hockey.

The gold-medal game, which saw British Columbia win 7-4, was sold out on Feb. 13.

• METRO

Medal standings

	G	S	B	Tot.
QUEBEC	26	25	17	68
B.C.	14	11	15	40
ALBERTA	10	10	14	34
ONTARIO	11	11	11	33
SASK.	4	2	3	9
MAN.	1	2	4	7
N.B.	0	1	3	4
YUKON	2	0	2	4
N.L.	0	1	2	3
NOVA SCOTIA	1	0	1	2
N.W.T.	0	0	0	0
NUNAVUT	0	0	0	0
P.E.I.	0	0	0	0

Flag points are awarded to every athlete in every sport based on performance and participation, and are aggregated for a provincial or territorial total.

	2007	2011
QUEBEC	285.0	131.0
B.C.	252.0	130.0
ONTARIO	294.0	130.0
ALBERTA	253.0	120.0
MAN.	191.5	80.0
SASK.	198.5	78.0
N.S.	105.0	70.0
N.B.	122.5	45.0
P.E.I.	60.0	41.0
YUKON	65.5	28.0
N.W.T.	35.0	24.5
N.L.	75.5	19.5
NUNAVUT	9.0	1.0

Blowout prevented by P.E.I. goaltender

► Nova Scotia's power play scores three in opening victory ► Next for N.S.: Quebec, who beat Yukon 17-0 yesterday, at Metro Centre tonight, 7:30 p.m.



MATTHEW
WUEST
@METRONEWS.CA

Nova Scotia's women's hockey team made sure the province opened Week 2 of the Canada Winter Games on a winning note.

Led by a relentless offensive attack that finished with 41 shots, Nova Scotia downed P.E.I. 4-1 at the Metro Centre as women's hockey — the only game in town yesterday — kicked off the second phase of the Games.

"We were definitely excited starting the week

off," said forward Jennifer MacAskill, whose goal at 5:04 of the second period snapped a 1-1 tie and stood as the winner.

"We knew we had to come out strong, and we did. In front of the home crowd it just felt awesome."

With 2,400 in the stands waving flags and handmade signs, Nova Scotia came out flying and might have turned the game into a blowout, had it not been for P.E.I. goalie Hayden Pridham.

Although Nova Scotia had a 2-1 lead, Pridham

had stopped 27 of 29 shots — many in spectacular fashion — when she left the game with a charley horse at 6:59 of the second.

"We were looking at each other, going 'Where did this goalie come from? How are we going to get shots past her?'" said Nova Scotia blue-liner Alexis Crossley.

It was Crossley who broke through after Catherine Wood replaced Pridham, scoring on a power-play one-timer at the 13:44 of the second to make it 3-1. The Dart-

mouth native also assisted on Sarah Robichaud's 4-1 goal in the third period.

The crowd motivated Nova Scotia to keep pushing and helped prevent frustration from setting in, Crossley said.

"We came out, everyone's there with signs and everything, and we all look at each other and say 'Is this real? Is this happening?'" Crossley said. "It's so nice to be at home."

Blayre Turnbull also scored, and Stefannie Moak made 27 saves in goal.

RYAN TAPLIN/METRO



► Nova Scotia's Jennifer MacAskill gets off a shot on P.E.I. netminder Hayden Pridham as she falls to the ice during the first period of last night's Canada Winter Games matchup at the Metro Centre.

Women's hockey on thin ice with IOC

Emily Fulton dreams of wearing a maple-leaf-embazoned hockey sweater some day and skating alongside other Canadian women on Olympic ice.

And so it wasn't easy for the 18-year-old forward from Stratford, Ont., to hear the president of the International Olympic Committee cast doubt upon her sport during the Vancouver Games last year.

Citing the competitive imbalance between countries playing the sport, Jacques Rogge raised the prospect of nixing women's hockey from the Olympics unless improvements are made.

"I kinda took that hard a little bit," said Fulton, who's representing her home province as it looks for its fifth consecutive gold medal at the Canada Winter Games this week.

"I think women's hockey is headed in a great direction. Certainly you have the top guns, per se, with Canada and the U.S. But the other teams are right behind. They're improving so much."

Melody Davidson, who coached Canada to gold in Vancouver, said there's no question women's hockey has a future at the Olympics. People need to be "willing to put their necks on the line" for the game.

"Jacques Rogge's comments were dead-on at the last Olympics. His timing maybe could have been better, but everybody's got to wake up here and get together," said Davidson. "It can't just be Canada and the U.S. sinking everything into their preparation and the other countries doing it part way or not at all."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Local skaters to be big draw

► St. Margaret's Centre has 300 seats plus a 30-40 capacity standing room



If speedskating packed them into St. Margaret's Centre in Tantallon last week, just wait until hometown figure skaters take to the rink this week.

Eleven-year-old Rebecca MacDonald and Bradley Keeping-Myra, 12, will hit the ice starting this morning at the facility in Tantallon. Matthew Webb, 17, from Upper Tantallon is also competing at his home rink.

All three are entered in the dance pre-novice mix category.

"This is the home rink

"I don't believe it's sold out but I'm expecting some big crowds on certain days. We have some local kids that are going to be competing."

MIKE LEROUX, GENERAL MANAGER OF ST. MARGARET'S CENTRE.

for them so it's going to be exciting. I'm pretty sure they'll pack the facility," said Mike Leroux, general manager.

The Canada Games has been a huge boon to St. Margaret's. About a year ago the rink was enlarged

to an Olympic-sized ice surface with new seats and lights installed. It was a \$1-million Games legacy renovation.

St. Margaret's played host to speedskating in the first week and it packed the house.

"It's been a great week," Leroux said. "We've had packed stands to capacity and standing-room only every day for the competition days. It's just too bad we didn't have more seats."

It makes for such a good speedskating venue, the Dartmouth club is "more than likely" relocating to Tantallon in the fall, Leroux said.

Young hockey star remains focused

The player touted as hockey's next big prospect feels he successfully skated through the hype at the Canada Winter Games.

Cole Harbour's Nathan MacKinnon, 15, helped Nova Scotia to a seventh-place finish at the competition in Halifax, finishing with eight goals and three assists in seven games.

MacKinnon, who received plenty of media coverage, said he didn't let the attention that came with playing in his hometown affect his overall play.

"I think if anything it motivated me to be better since there (were) high expectations of me," said MacKinnon. "I don't think it hurt my play at all."

MacKinnon, a centre who plays at Shattuck-St. Mary's prep school in Minnesota, made a big impression on scouts with the QMJHL draft just around the corner in June.

"To come out with the Games that Nathan has proves that he is likely the guy that is going to go first overall in the (draft)," said Tom Russell, an independent junior hockey scout.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Events to watch

Today's highlights



ALPINE SKIING Ski Wentworth

The para giant slalom runs are being held at 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.



BADMINTON Canada Games Centre

Singles and doubles action gets underway at 9 a.m.



BOXING Halifax Forum

Preliminary action gets underway in the evening at 7 p.m.



CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING Ski Martock

Para races are at 10 and 10:35 a.m., while the men's 10-kilometre and women's 7.5-kilometre free events are at 10:50 a.m. and 12:15 p.m.



CURLING Mayflower Curling Club

Nova Scotia plays P.E.I. at 10 a.m. and New Brunswick at 2:30 p.m. among eight games today.



HOCKEY Metro Centre

Nova Scotia's women play Quebec at 7:30 p.m. among five games on the schedule.



TABLE TENNIS Citadel High School

Team action begins at 9:30 a.m. and runs throughout the day and evening.



FIGURE SKATING

St. Margaret's Centre

Pre-novice dance goes at 9:30, while the male singles short program goes at 11:15 a.m. and the female at 5 p.m. Also today are pre-novice pairs short program (7:40 p.m.) and the Special Olympics events (8:25 p.m.).

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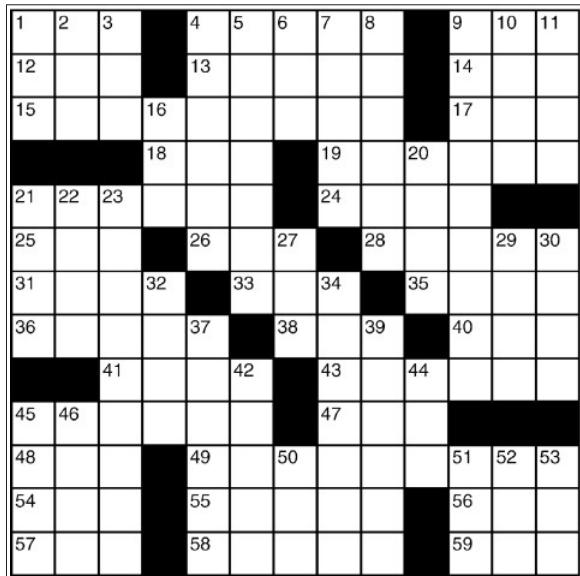
Crossword

Across

1 Components of psyches
4 Dervish
9 Atl. counterpart
12 Meadow
13 Sierra —
14 "Ben—"
15 Lustful
17 Historic period
18 Old Oldsmobile
19 Sacred beetle
21 Indiana basketball team
24 Coin of the Continent
25 Durham sch.
26 Boar's mate
28 Whom Bugs bugs
31 Goblet feature
33 Zodiac feline
35 Seep out
36 Calligraphy stroke
38 Plant sticker
40 Gun-lobby org.
41 Leave out
43 Needle partner
45 Jaunty
47 Luau bowlful
48 One's years
49 Greek historian
54 Poolroom stick
55 Obliterate
56 Raw rock
57 Affirmative
58 Fender benders
59 Stick with a kick

Down

1 Ailing
2 Sardor or Ruby
3 Pouch
4 Laughs derisively
5 Spray-can contents

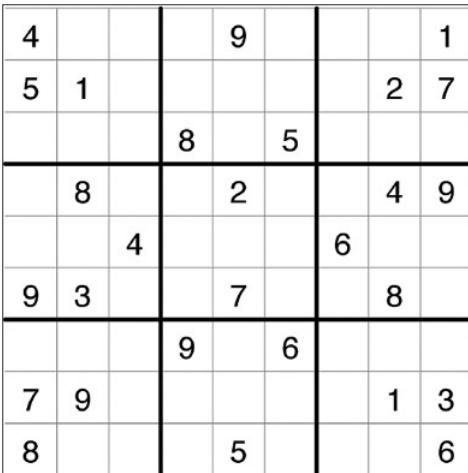


6 "Kitchy—!" 30 Scan
7 Occupied 32 Actress Rogers
8 Save 34 Overseas military
9 Stimulating secre-
tion 37 Went after martin
10 Emanation 39 Colossus of —
11 Grouch 42 Yonder
16 Charlemagne's 44 Carnival city
realm (Abbr.) 45 Risque
20 Singer Guthrie 46 Chills and fever
21 Face, slangily 50 Skedaddled
22 Initial chip 51 Youngster
23 Tennessee tribes-
people 52 Coffee vessel
27 Charlotte's creation 53 Collection

► Yesterday's answer



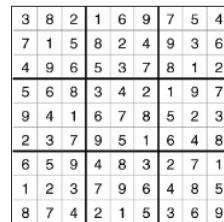
Sudoku



How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Yesterday's answer ►



Today

** -4°/-7°
* Flurries
40%

Tuesday

** -4°/-8°
* Flurries
40%



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Today's horoscope



For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

Aries March 21-April 20 Use your powers of persuasion to get others to help you with something important. Because you are so impatient you may be inclined to go it alone but you won't get far on your own.

Taurus April 21-May 21 You are in exactly the right frame of mind to take a few risks, and chances are they will pay off in a big way.

Gemini May 22-June 21 Take the initiative and make things happen. If you sit there waiting for others to make the first move you won't get anywhere worth going today, so stop thinking so much and just act.

Cancer June 22-July 22 Everyone seems to approve of

what you are planning, but don't take that as a green light just yet because there are a still a few loose ends that need to be tidied up before the time is right.

Leo July 23-Aug. 23 You are advised not to take anything, yourself included, too seriously today. Cultivate a frame of mind where life becomes a game and winning and losing are not in themselves that important.

Virgo Aug. 24-Sept. 22 Take responsibility for your thoughts, your words and your actions and don't try to blame others if things don't work out exactly as you had planned. Maybe that's not such a bad thing.

Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23 How much do you trust someone you work with? Enough to trust them with a secret you don't want the whole world to know?

Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 22 Push your luck a bit today. Take the kind of chances you usually prefer to avoid.

Sagittarius Nov. 23-Dec. 21 A good deed done with no thought of reward for yourself will have the kind of positive consequences that even a far-sighted Sag cannot have anticipated.

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 20 This is one of the best times of the year for socializing and mixing with people from all

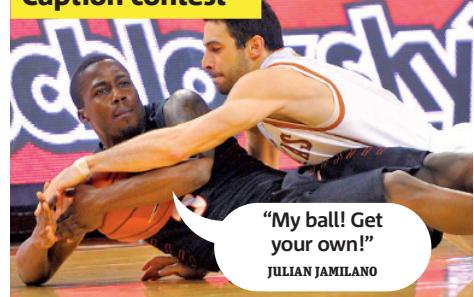
walks of life, so don't sit there by yourself, get out into the world and make things happen.

Aquarius Jan. 21-Feb. 18 Mercury, Mars and Neptune join forces in your birth sign today, making this the perfect time to give wings to your imagination. The world needs people who are not afraid to act on their dreams. In short, the world needs you.

Pisces Feb. 19-March 20 Stand back from yourself today and try to understand why you think and act in certain ways. Once you realize that so much of what you do is done out of habit it will be easier to change your ways.

• SALLY BROMPTON

Caption contest



MICHAEL THOMAS / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

You write it!

Write a funny caption for the image to the right and send it to play@metronews.ca — the winning caption will be published in tomorrow's Metro.



WALLY SANTANA / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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YOUR BOBCAT

I just want to send love to my bf M.c. His been my rock through my life. I just wanna say thank you..je t'aime cheri... Yours truly Angel m Wallace..

Track 26 Lady: Thank you for returning my belongings and restoring my faith in humanity. You are one in a million!

Debby, I love you dearly, my bestfriend. Times are going to be tough, but I will be by your side for every step of it. Be strong, and have faith.

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